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The Italian Challenge

THE CHRISTIAN Democrats have re-acted to their great electoral victory in Italy in the sane way of admitting and facing the grave and unsolved problems of their country. The Vatican, whose moral prestige, after the campaign speeches and activities, is deeply associated with the Italian Government, has also stressed the unmet challenges of Italy's desperate social and economic state. Italy's condition is a challenge to other Western peoples as well as to her own.

There is no barrier blocking the non-communist world from Italian affairs. A relatively free field for Western activity has been maintained there by resolute and able political action.. Now, what can the nations do? De Gasperi quickly made his country's bid for inclusion in the alliance of France and England and the Benelux nations. Politically, economically and militarily, the broadening of that alliance in this direction is so unarguably desirable that debate need hardly be expected in the West. It is delay which must be avoided. The inertia of things as they have been must be overcome, if wars as they have been, and nationalistic strangulation as it has been, are not to come again too quickly. Italy is terribly dependent on the outside world—her economy, her military safety, her perennial emigration excess of population. If Western Europe, or the Western World, propose themselves as offering a viable form of free life, they must prove themselves soon in the Italian Peninsula.

But the victors at the polls cannot turn too extrovert. Social justice and the drive for a more even sharing of social power necessitate an active and radical domestic policy, if Italy is to hold up and be in a position to benefit by foreign cooperation. The home effects of the Italian electio should leave the field for effective action appreciably more free. The Nenni, left-wing socialists, who entered the communist camp, have been broken—as socialists who go with the communists always are broken. They have been sifted, and the Communist Party presumably captured about 1,250,000 of their voters. The Sarragat, anti-communist socialists, who are in the Government, won 1,860,000 votes. Nenni's group ended up with 1,600,000, and these are now decidedly split, with a large rebel group demanding an end to the impossible policy of acting like communists while pretending an independent status and viewpoint. The communists, with their Russian policy and their wrecking, irresponsible, obstructionist strategies and tactics, are on a fair way to being isolated and labeled with an unconcealable totalitarian mark. With 30 per cent of the electorate they constitute a challenge to social effort of dangerously massive proportions, indeed, but for the time they seem less able to prevent the operations of a Government which uses the authority it constitutionally possesses.

As Berlin Goes . . .

ON THE BASIS of any ideas brought forward so far, the situation in Germany is hopeless. Russia won't let Eastern Germany go to the Western Powers, and we won't let Western Germany go to Russia, and nobody will let Germany go together on her own. The French ideas, and de Gaulle's, have little currency in this country as yet, but what sounds different in them so far also sounds impossible—Are they saying "federalized Germany in a federalized Europe?" Somehow, none of these four alternatives sounds to weary ears presently worth a world war.

Bizonia, or, with luck and judicious bargaining, Trizonia, is a conception of modified status quo. That appears to be necessary, and therefore wise and good. Maintaining and building Trizonia would enforce improvisation and a certain flexibility and experimentation. It will be

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a constant trial and trouble for Europe and the rest of the West so that it will not be easy for the nations to grow altogether lazy, isolationist and unrealistic. It is an area where the stress and troubles of the times will demand attention and cry for solution. The German is probably the last problem that will be solved in Europe, and Europe must grow up to meet it—grow in cooperation, in clarity of vision, in order.

The absolute separation of eastern and western Europe would mean an abandoning of the European problem. The centripetal force of Germany is the strongest guard against that abandonment. Now, the ex-capital, Berlin, focuses the national and international rôle. Read about in the proper mood, the goings-on there are absurd, with the strongest nations the world has ever seen behaving wonderfully like children. But, of course, the play there is of world importance. Russia wants to drive out England and France and the U.S., and to force the Western Zones into the position of a fractional, successor state of Germany. We have to stick in Berlin. The West must not accept the Iron Curtain and the unmitigated hostility which that separation symbolizes. Berlin is an enclave in the East, where Communists and the rest still exist in the same city. Vienna and, in a way, Trieste, are the only remaining such spots, and they are subsidiary to Berlin. So it seems better to bicker, and scrap, and be insulted and enormously annoyed in Berlin than to give up and retire out of range to where angers can be more safely nursed to the ultimately devastating dimensions.

Co-ownership

HUEY LONG'S phrase, "Every man a king," was not without a basis and likewise the slogan of the almost defunct British Liberal Party for the past ten years, "Ownership for all." Both would be taken in stride by a thorough-going Distributist. The Liberal Party, meeting in annual conclave, has just outlined a program which would put this concept into effect even in mass production industries. This will hardly bring back the Liberals to the power they wielded under Gladstone, Asquith and Lloyd George—but it may supply a happy variant for laissez faire capitalism or state ownership.

It is particularly significant that it should be the formula for entering the lists against a government pledged to nationalization. The Liberals would achieve their stated objective by limiting corporate profits and distributing the excess between wage earners and shareholders. They would also sponsor bills which would give employees representation on boards of directors.

The advantages and disadvantages of the set-up itself have priority for discussion purposes over the means of bringing it to be. In the most general terms genuine co-ownership is obviously preferable to unrestricted private enterprise with the worker either accepting his servile role or preparing for class war. Human nature, being as it is, co-ownership of enterprise also has many advantages over state ownership, where an even intenser degree of centralization than capitalism effects, the weight and corruption of bureaucracy and the dependence of the individual for his livelihood on the state, and the favor of the party in power, reduces him to complete subservience. This latter, of course, refers to a general set-up of state ownership of productive property, not to specific tasks such as the TVA which the state or semi-public corporations can perform better than any other entity.

How would a scheme similar to that of the Liberal Party work today in the United States? We are still in a period of grave inflationary pressures—due to rearmament, ERP, the unsatisfied demand for many durable goods, reduction of the personal income tax, etc. With living costs up two-thirds from the figure accepted as normal, unions are pressing for a third "cost-of-living" increase. If they are successful, manufacturing costs will again increase, then prices.

Those who read the American labor press will agree that the pressure for wage increases comes not only from individual battles with living costs but from constant underlining of high corporate profits. The worker-management relationship which inspired the determination to get as much pay for as little work as possible now results in an equal determination on the part of the worker to get his at any hazard. Hence relentless pressure for ever higher wages, itself another major inflationary influence.

Under a worker-management partnership system the question of wages would be approached differently. "Ability to pay" would be a factor worked out jointly, with each worker owning enough stock as to share materially in the profits. With company policies set by a directorate of both workers and company executives—due sharing of responsibility, ownership and profits—community of interest would have a greater chance to prevail. There would seem to be far less chance of wages—and prices—climbing and climbing until an inevitable crash. And where competition between companies or between products were inadequate in protecting consumers of the products of these jointly-owned companies, the state by excess profits taxes and other regulation could keep things in hand. Co-ownership is a system worth exploring.

The Rosenwald Fund

THE JULIUS ROSENWALD Fund, "to enrich and equalize opportunities for all Americans," has distributed twenty-two million dollars

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and now there is no more money in the bank. That is because Julius Rosenwald did not believe in perpetual endowments and stipulated that the foundation he created should expend itself and close its work within twenty-five years of his death.

It has been fine work: the building of rural schools for Negroes, assistance to Negro colleges, efforts to equalize health facilities (the Blue Cross now providing hospital insurance for 23,500,000 Americans is a direct result of this effort.) Fellowships for the advanced training of 600 Negroes and 250 white Southerners, substantial aid to general social and educational agencies.

There is one passage in Edwin R. Embree's final report (he presided over the Fund for the past twenty years) which deserves notice. Mr. Embree knows that America has not yet reached true interracial democracy. "Yet," he says, "the progress during the thirty-one years of the fund's life has been tremendous. Negroes now rate in education, health, economic status and other measures of achievement far above the total population of all but a few very favored nations. They are participating in every phase of American life—labor and industry, science and scholarship, music and the fine arts, public leadership of all sorts."

That is something we forget. Perhaps it is wise to forget it lest we sit back and do nothing, allowing great and evident injustice to persist. But once in a while it is permissible to recall the heartbreaking voyage in the dark holds of the slave trading ships that brought these displaced, dark and despairing persons to our shores from Africa, and measure objectively, but not complacently, their state now against their state then.

King Cyrus and the Coats

A BIG BOY, possessor of too small a coat, forced its acceptance upon a small boy, whose coat was too large. Both appealed to Cyrus. Logic and force were on the big boy's side; only justice upon the small. The Palestine issue is complicated by the fact that it is the small boy who is the aggressor, and that he has never had either undisputed possession, or clear title to either coat. It is also complicated by the fact that Cyrus himself cannot today be wholly impartial: it is to his interest that the coats be exchanged, it is to all mankind's interest, and maybe it is even necessary to their survival, that the Jews find a haven.

As May Day approaches, all nations prepare grimly for an international dance of death around a maypole that, disowning its Freudian ancestry, is shaped most like an Ark. Everyone already mouths his lines. The Occupying Power "will not take part in imposing a solution unless it is acceptable to both Jews and Arabs, and will not act alone." Britain, in fact, acts Cyrus *Redivivus*. The Soviet bloc has shown itself consistently pro-Jewish, even to refusing to join in an otherwise unanimous interim effort to spare Jerusalem, since that would be acknowledging, albeit briefly, the possibility of a solution other than partition. Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, the spokesman for the Jewish Agency, "would never accept trusteeship." Dr. Magnes, the revered head of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is for a truce, for mediation. And is likely to suffer at the hands of his own people.

Meantime, the music has struck up, and is already playing fast and furiously. Irgun declare their attack on Jaffa to be the first step in their campaign to annex all of Arab Palestine; the Haganah's capture of Haifa has given King Abdullah his cue. Pointing to the Jewish attacks on peaceful villages, to the funds collected here publicly on Times Square—"Give a dollar to kill an Arab"—he has declared that he will invade Palestine on May 1st, leading units of the armies of Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon, while Egypt will march as an allied power. Only when Arab sovereignty over their own country is not disputed "will he allow to the Jewish community the exercise of citizen rights similar to those of the Arabs within a decentralized administration in those areas where the Jews are in a majority." In fact, first the Jews must yield; then the victim will be magnanimous.

Not since the Maccabees have the Jews fought as a nation: no one will deny them their right to do so now. They have, indeed, perhaps waited too long. For there are always two ways of getting what one wants, by mind and by might. And when petition and Parliament fail, finally, there are fists. That we must all share in guilt for the deaths of the six million Jews the Nazis killed is as certain as that we are wholly responsible for the present condition of the millions who survive in European camps. Yet the fate of the Jews was nothing to all who passed by from 1933-9, and it is only something today to most people and peoples because of its horrid nuisance value. It is utterly tragic that the only way the Jews can be satisfied is at the expense of a hardly less tragic people, only recently liberated: the Arabs were under Turkish rule almost as long as the Jews under Arab. Historically the Jews have less right to Palestine than the Muslims, who have been in continuous possession for over thirteen hundred years: equitably, spiritually, culturally, even economically, they have equal if not greater rights. Nationally, the case for Arab sovereignty seems clear; internationally, the need for a Jewish homeland in Palestine is imperative. And may God have mercy on our souls.

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Catholics and Socialists

The author of "Bread and Wine" on the need for an understanding

Ignazio Silone

IN THE great majority of Western European countries, the stability of democratic institutions and social progress depend mainly, I think, on the kind of relations which will be established in the next few years between Socialists and Christian Democrats. You may say that, after various initial efforts to set up governments of wider coalition, the government in France, Belgium, Holland and Western Germany, is based essentially on Catholic and Socialist forces. But I must point out, so as not to be misunderstood, that these alliances are of a temporary, limited and debatable nature. There is not as yet in any of these countries, that courageous, self-committing and widely comprehensive collaboration which I think indispensable if we are to have real, lasting social renewal in the field of democratic institutions. It is also true, unfortunately, that the majority of the Demo-Christian and Socialist leaders are still far from realizing to what extent their fates and responsibilities are interlocked.

In this respect, we are even further away from the truth in Italy than in other countries. And this despite the fact that in no other country is collaboration between Catholics and Socialists absolutely an historical necessity. Anyone having some degree of clarity of vision must be convinced that without this collaboration, we will neither have internal peace, maintaining a democratic republic, nor be able to do anything positive for the country's renewal.

Whence derive the difficulties which prevent Catholic and Socialist leaders from traveling along the road which wisdom would advise? They are manifold, but I think that some of those which are normally considered most difficult to overcome are very much overrated. The most outstanding differences refer, as is well known, to ideological contrasts, which are particularly felt in Latin countries. But how do things really stand?

Foreign observers have criticized the excess of ideological zeal we Italians bring into political discussion and have praised the American, English, Swedish, Swiss *et al* custom of restricting the discussion between political parties to actual problems in hand.

Although, politically, a reference to ideological and religious confessionalism is opportune, one must not forget that in Italy, after the fall of fascism, nearly all problems pertaining to the state have inevitably come up for discussion, including those which in certain other countries had already been solved, and that therefore discussion of the fundamental relations between citizens was unavoidable. This had led to the consideration of general issues. In the present phase of our public life, empiricism would have been as great an error as abstract idealism. We should keep in mind Bergson's dictum: "One must act like intellectuals and think like men of action."

But what is the genuine Socialist's opinion on the crisis of our time?

For the Socialist, the main cause of the historical crisis which humanity is now undergoing originates in the strident contrast between the real development of society and its political organization. In other words, politics are behind the times in comparison with society and therefore, on account of the interplay of cause and effect, they disturb, falsify, and poison our social life. In this diagnosis I include a condemnation of nationalism and imperialism as being obsolete political forms, inadequate to guarantee the civil development of human relations. That knowledge which is necessary for a real understanding and cure of the sickness of which we are the present victims can come to us only, therefore, from an analysis of the relationship between state and society. Without it any form of political reconstruction runs the risk of being merely a juridical construction, a building with weak foundations and therefore unstable, or else a monstrous machine, unjust, inhuman, born of violence and selfishness.

And what is the most authoritative Catholic opinion on the matter? In the upholding of the rights of society against the exorbitant demands of the state, which is an instrument of only a few individual interests, there exist many unsuspected points of identity between the Catholic and Socialist idea. And this despite the fact that, for the Socialist, the most genuine expression of social rights is represented especially by the proletariat. Sincere Catholic thought, one must admit, has never given way to the totalitarian demands of the state, because Catholics have always had

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good reason to limit the state's power and to fight for the rights of the individual in the necessity of defending their Church. The contrast between state law and canon law does not reproduce, as is thought by Croce, the contrast between politics and moral laws, but corresponds instead to two entirely different types of society: the political society of citizens, represented by the state, and religious society, represented by the Church.

Catholic thought has always affirmed the plurality of human institutions, from which emanates a plurality of social rights which is the widest and most explicit conceivable. In some memorable Christmas Encyclicals of the first years of the second World War, the present Pope upheld these rights, which had been trodden underfoot and denied by the totalitarian states, with a force and deepness of expression that made him, on those occasions, the true representative of humanity. The echo roused by those words derived not only from the terrible and near-desperate situation in which we all found ourselves, but also reflected the keen desire in all of us—oppressed by dictatorship and confronted by the horrors of war—to fulfil some of man's natural, individualistic rights, together with the urgent desire that certain fundamental rights of human dignity and social harmony be protected from the ruthless fury of tyranny and conflict between the states.

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The Catholic concept of the rights of man and of society, even if linked to transcendency in its formulation, is essentially based on natural rights and coincides with positive rights. Consequently it is not valid only for the religious community, but for all citizens. Even if, as a result of the evolution of culture in Western Europe, the Catholic Church has remained the main champion of natural rights, it would be wrong to deduce from this that it is in any way the result of a transcendent metaphysic. A recognition of natural right, as is well known, preceded Christendom, and inspired Seneca when he condemned slavery. "Jusnaturalistic" concepts and impulses are to be found in all modern liberal and democratic movements; and from the comparison between the jusnaturalistic intuition of the human and the historical condition of the proletariat, between the natural dignity of man and the slavery of fixed salaries, has come the spark from which the Socialist conscience flamed.

Jusnaturalism and historicalism, together with the old revolutionary faith in the Italian State, are the inspirations of Socialism. They seem contradictory and divergent, but in the present historical trend they reflect very faithfully the drama of the modern proletarian and justify fully his aspiration to the direction of social life —in the interest of human ethics and in the interest of the history and the evolution of our times. If in the era preceding the present one, socialism appeared to be limited by narrow class boundaries, today it can carry out its mission only if it understands that it represents a universal human necessity.

The affirmation of Pius XII that the state must not dominate but serve society and become its instrument can be found, expressed with the same words, in Marx's and Engel's manifesto. The entire Marxist concept of historical development is based on the dialectic relationship between the social structure, continually changing and progressing, and the resistance of the political, ideological and moral forms of the *superstructure,* which try to perpetuate themselves. This same concept, except for differences of wording and of method, but always accompanied by an open defense of society's rights, can be found in the most modern socialist trends, some of which I will just mention in passing: the Guild Socialism of the Englishman, G. D. Cole; the humanistic Socialism of Blum; the *Wirtschaftdemocratie* of certain German socialists; the constructive syndicalism of the Frenchman, Maxine Leroy, the theory of social justice of Georges Gurvich. The substantial affinity of the ways of conceiving relations between society and state is far more important, I think, than the metaphysical differences which limit many older Socialists' field of vision.

But there are serious differences of opinion between Catholics and Socialists on the practical solution of the contrast between state and society that we all think is at the root of the present crisis. The development of monopolies and national autarchy has deeply affected the social structure of all countries. Society is ill. It is not possible today to postulate the reconstruction of the democratic state if society is not cured at the same time. And this cure can only be effected through deep and courageous structural reforms similar to actual surgical operations, to eliminate from the social body the pathological phenomena which alter its normal functions.

The Catholics seem to hold back from radical measures and to oscillate between a passive and conservative attitude and a moralizing and sterile reformism. That social justice, which in the last Papal Encyclical seemed to dictate a supreme need for renovation, therefore runs the risk of degenerating into a Right which simply conserves the status quo.

The truth is this: no man can be his own surgeon, and political Catholicism, generally speaking, in spite of its good intentions, is too closely tied to the present malady of society. If Socialism can boast in comparison of superior freedom and effectiveness, this is certainly not on account of any originality of its theories, in reality rather

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eclectic, but on account of the close union with the class of the proletariat, which constitutes the healthiest part of modern society, and is the class which has in its conditions of life a pressing reason for fighting for a new order.

Good and true ideas which remain only on paper have the same fate as the salt which loses its savor, of which the Bible tells us: the fate of salt which remains in the saltcellar. The collaboration of Catholics and Socialists for the salvation of democracy and the renovation of Europe demands a lot of courage on both sides.

Whether There Is Sorrow in the Demons

Near the top a bad turn some dare. Well,
The horse swerves and screams, his eyes pop,
Feet feel air, the firm winds prop
Jaws wide wider until
Through great teeth rider greets the smiles of Hell.

Thick night, where the host's thews crack like thongs
A welcome, curving abrupt on cheek & neck.
No wing swings over once to check
Lick of their fires' tongues,
Whip & chuckle, hoarse insulting songs.

Powers immortal, fixed, intractable.
Only the lost soul jerks whom they joy hang:
Clap of remorse, and tang and fang
More frightful than the drill
An outsize dentist scatters down a skull;

Nostalgia rips him swinging. Fast in malice
How may his masters mourn, how ever yearn
The frore pride wherein they burn?
God's fire. To what *qui tollis*
Stone-tufted ears prick back towards the bright Palace?

Whence Lucifer shone Lucifer's friends hail
The scourge of choice made at the point of light
Destined into eternal night;
Motionless to fulfil
Their least, their envy looks up dense and pale.

. . Repine blackmarket felons; murderers
Sit still their time, till yellow feet go first,
Dies soon in them, and can die, thirst;
Not lives in these, nor years
On years scar their despair—which yet rehearse. . .

Their belvedere is black. They believe, and quail.
One shudder racks them only, lonely, and
No mirror breaks at their command.
Unsocketed, their will
Grinds on their fate. So was, so shall be still.

JOHN BERRYMAN.

The Zeitgeist and the Pilot

JOHN P. SISK

THE IDEA seems to have gotten around that Enterprise Studios' long promised "The Arch of Triumph" is going to make some kind of motion picture history. In fact, as I looked over the article *Life* recently devoted to the arch itself ($35,000 worth of it on a scale of one to sixteen with the original), I got the impression that the movie version of this best-seller might reduce all previous war-time epics to the stature of Mack Sennett comedies. At the same time I remembered that I had not fulfilled a long standing obligation to read the novel.

It was about two years ago that Remarque's saga of Paris on the eve of conflict was first called to my attention. We were stationed at Palm Beach at the time, lately back from overseas, relishing that brief and beautifully purposeless intermezzo between the cessation of hostilities and the re-entry into civilian life. We lay luxuriously late abed, breakfasted in the open air, played gin rummy, golfed on fairways of plush and velvet, swam in the Gulf Stream, wined and dined along Worth Avenue and County Road. Between times my friend the pilot lay on his bunk, quiet as a stone, and read "The Arch of Triumph." When he finished the novel he was not the same man he had been before. A great change had come over him. He tried to tell me about it.

Unfortunately, my friend the pilot did not have the verbal equipment to lay bare his soul. He was sensitive and intelligent beyond the average, tended to be moody and introspective, but in all matters of sensibility and intellect he lived in a miasma where things tended to blend confusedly into one another, which is as much as to say that he was an average American with an average American education. Still I could see that he was trying to tell me that he had found in "The Arch of Triumph" the first acceptable articulation of the world in which he lived.

He urged me to read the story. I put him off, saying that I was in no mood for novels (as a matter of fact, I was dismayed by its more than four hundred pages), but promised that some day after I was a civilian again I would get into it. I suppose I never really intended to read the book. But the extravagant publicity that attended the making of the movie aroused a curiosity that could not be denied. I kept my promise to the pilot, but in the meantime he had crashed against a mountain somewhere in South America.

I do not intend to evaluate "The Arch of

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Triumph" at this late date. Competent critics have weighed it in the balance, I am sure, and have assigned it its proper rung—certainly not too near the top—in the ladder that leads to the heaven of Proust and Joyce. But thinking of my friend the pilot, feeling the immense attraction of both the hero and the mood of the novel for our times, and not a little impressed with the thought of the millions who will see the movie, I cannot forbear making the following observations.

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To begin with the mood. The feeling-tone of "The Arch of Triumph" is a thing of *Weltschmerz* and *Götterdämmerung,* heavy with the associations of dingy bars, melancholy prostitutes, and light rain on desolate city streets. It is based on a kind of irony: the bittersweetly recognized disparity between the surface show and promise of modern civilization and the actual decay that infests it everywhere. Hence the importance of the metropolitan setting: the glitter of night lights, taxis, airplanes, the latest anodynes and techniques in medicine, the conveniences of science, Paris itself hunch-backed with a tradition of culture, and that necessary adjunct—the Riviera. All this is obvious enough. The more glamorous the surface the more effectively the inner degeneration is foiled off. We sit in the bistro drinking cognac. It is very sad. The thin rain is a diaphane through which the Arch of Triumph hulks like a titanic ghost. Meanwhile beneath us we hear the termites chewing at the pillars of civilization. We drop a mental tear and sip the cognac. Somehow it never tasted better.

Then to look at Ravic, the hero, in this atmosphere. He fits into the feeling-tone of *Weltschmerz* and *Götterdämmerung* as though it were tailor-made for him—which it was, for that matter. Indeed, Ravic represents one of the most popular concepts of modern man. To begin with, he is struggling to maintain unity and peace of mind in a disintegrating world that knows no peace. He has suffered on an international scale. The scars on his soul, one feels, are reflected in his face so that he bears his torturous past as visibly as the Wandering Jew. He has known deep love and has suffered deeply because of it—prime requisite in any modern hero. He is mainly unillusioned, as befits one who has been so far beneath the surface of things, but holds fast to elemental humanities (nothing else is left in our careening world).

Then he is a doctor of outstanding ability. This is important. Our best contemporary heroes are doctors: we are afraid we will die; psychiatrists: we are afraid we will go mad; or scientists: we are afraid we will be blown up. Ravic is attractive to women and vice versa. He tends to be philosophical and introspective, indulges frequently in what is known as the interior monologue, but always checks these tendencies short of the reader's boredom. This side of his nature is pointed to in the kind of reading he favors (solid stuff, but not too much of it; life has been his book), and in the gloom of his interior monologues, which run predominantly to *Weltschmerz.* Naturally, he is a self-aware person, schooled against the pitfalls of sentimentality. In short, he is a happy blend of Hamlet, Koestler, Hemingway, and Dr. Kildare.

The extent to which Ravic embodies the ideals of modern man is worthy of comment. He is tough but not cynical, sophisticated but not shallow, amorous but not the pawn of his passion, beaten but not bowed, immersed in chaos but stoically still on his feet. Ravic, in fact, has for the reader the value of a gigantic pose—and I do not mean to deny that he was created out of genuinely moving experience so far as Mr. Remarque was concerned, or that as a man he is entirely impossible. Here, indeed, is a key to the great popularity of "The Arch of Triumph." Literally it is concerned with events that are plainly painful. Decay, confusion, tragedy, imminent catastrophe are everywhere in it. Yet they do not add up to a terrifying experience for the average reader. They add up to a very pleasurable experience. This pleasurable experience is more than that to be gotten from any work of art the subject of which is painful or ugly: esthetic pleasure, pleasure of reading a well told story, etc.

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In this connection some remarks of T. S. Eliot come to mind. In one of his essays he discusses the extent to which Shakespeare's tragic heroes illustrate Seneca and stoical principles: how they have a tendency to "cheer themselves up" by dramatizing themselves against their environments. Ravic, of course, is too much the modern unillusioned hero to do this consciously. Ravic is one thing, however, while the value he has for the reader so far as a comforting articulation of life is concerned is something else again. The average reader makes somewhat the same use of the *Weltschmerz* in "The Arch of Triumph" that Eliot sees Shakespeare's heroes making of their particular tragic situations. He exploits it for what it is worth in the way of pleasure—the largely sentimental pleasure of conceiving himself as a mainly impotent, still vaguely honorable, but sadly doomed protagonist in a cosmic melodrama. Ravic is us, a heartbreaking Charlie Chaplin at the mercy of the mad titans of Fate. We weep delicious tears and sip the cognac.

What the reader does here is draw a comfort-

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ing significance, an egoistic meaning that works vicariously through Ravic, out of chaos and confusion. To feel confusion and disintegration around one is obviously not a pleasant sensation. But suddenly to become dramatically aware of oneself in such a pathetic situation is another matter. The senseless mess then begins to make sense, becomes not only endurable but pleasurable. For any situation, no matter how inscrutably bad, becomes meaningful as soon as we can find a way to extract even painful pleasure from it. "The Arch of Triumph" enabled my pilot friend to see himself in a significant and pleasurable relationship to what had previously seemed an extremely discouraging world environment. Things for the first time began to fall into a coherent pattern. No doubt, there was in his reaction to the novel something of that pure intellectual pleasure that anyone experiences as soon as the meaningless becomes meaningful. But there was more than that, for the pilot and for other readers. There was the special pleasure and special significance of conceiving oneself, bittersweetly, as victim-actor in this doomsday burlesque. Recall how "Journey's End" had much the same value for the public after the last war.

★

Every mood has its melody. For "The Arch of Triumph" the appropriate theme song would be "Lilli Marlene." The ballad belongs in the same time context, shares the *Weltschmerz* of the late days of wrath, and has the necessary ingredient, a poignant love-nostalgia. It was the common soldier's "Tristan and Isolde," the love-coronach that reconciled him to battle when often the most idealistic slogans left him cold. "Lilli Marlene" gave to the soldiers of World War II what "The Arch of Triumph" is giving to so many now: a dramatic concept of the self in a miserable situation that helps to make the situation meaningful and endurable, even pleasant. And if this seems to be making too much out of a simple song, let us say that it was the most typical of many contemporary expressions of a prevailing and popular attitude.

It is worth while noting that "Lilli Marlene" was truly an international war song. To whom it meant most, the Americans, the British, or the Germans, would be hard to say. But to all of them it meant pretty much the same thing: the poignantly sadsweet picture of deathless love set off compellingly against a backdrop of universal catastrophe that at once doomed the lovers and added relish to the love. Here was an articulation of a potentially chaotic situation that allowed the soldier to apprehend himself as a character of significance in a drama world-wide in scope and implication. Indeed, there was something significant in "Lilli Marlene's" universal appeal. Perhaps underneath the ideological differences that kept us at one another's throats for five years we were philosophically more akin than we realized: fascinated with the picture of ourselves as the doomsday kids; more than half persuaded that the picture was a true one.

★

Perhaps I ought to emphasize that I am not really talking about "The Arch of Triumph" itself (or about "Lilli Marlene" itself), but about what it means to a great number of its readers. After all, to criticize Remarque's novel for being weltschmerzy is like criticizing a chicken for having feathers: it's in the nature of the creature. For that matter, any number of poems, novels, or dramas, in themselves first-rate in sensibility and artistic execution, might be looked at as catering to modern man's instinctive need to dramatize himself sentimentally against a malign environment. Given the need for this "philosophy" of life, men will find its articulation readily enough.

The real issue here is the concentration on what is for many of us a particularly appealing world attitude—not the only world attitude, certainly, but a popular and significant one. In a time of disintegration the reach for some kind of integration is to be expected. One kind, the easiest and usually the one instinctively felt for, is the negative one of self-dramatization. This is cheering oneself up in a bad situation, making it more endurable.

Of course, any philosophy of life does "cheer" one up and make life more endurable; but the real philosophies of life do this incidentally and not by primary intent. The genuine philosophies of life are tougher at the core than this vulgar kind of stoicism that accepts so docilely and happily the belief that we are Fate's impotent and pitiable pawns. The former square one away healthfully to life; the latter digs deep the personal or group neurosis—and prepares the way for the un-neurotic Visigoths.

But apparently at certain periods in human history the lure of *Weltschmerz* is well nigh irresistible. There comes a time when men are tempted to cease fighting the potential chaos that is always their uneasy bedfellow and hug it to their bosoms for what it is worth. The question is: Are we in or approaching such a period now, verging on a mood of cosmic masochism? Will we at length hug ourselves sadly and weep delicious tears as we ascend head over heels in a cloud of atomic dust, the music of the spheres meanwhile sounding mysteriously like the love-death from "Tristan and Isolde?"

Whatever the answer, that last sentence in technicolor would gross millions.

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The German Exhibit

JAMES W. LANE

I HAVE never heard so much talk of the end of the world as during the last week. One feels, as one says one's prayers, that we're close to the end not of a chapter but of the book.

The crumble began ages ago. It was the first chapter then—Eden. But for Catholics the world after Christ darkened shortly after the lifetime of Luther. One look at the war-salvaged great paintings from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin, displayed at the National Gallery in Washington, will re-enforce this idea. One look, followed by many more, solidifies the idea into a certainty that after Luther or, say, at the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648)—we are in a thirty years' war now—most of Europe had lost real happiness. Europe didn't know it at the time nor until much later. The fact that individualism, wilfulness, dependence on self, though not new, then made themselves, as it were, official and practically announced that they needed no help from outside, that is, from God, is shown subtly at first in some Holbein portraits—then more and more buoyantly as the innovators gained confidence until one reaches Hals and then Rembrandt, for the latter was the first great romantic painter of the North. These qualities brought forth fresh, new, and it was thought, exciting paintings, dependent on personalism, light and air, a refurbished paganism, or other qualities of secularism generally. New discoveries in technique were made; new types of composition and subject matter appeared.

Religious painting by 1648 had lost its pristine mark of representing humble goodness and except in France, Italy, and Spain had begun to go out. Yet in its place came paintings which, while technically and spiritedly great (Rembrandt, Hals, and De Hooch), were spiritually either unhappy or lukewarm. I admit that Rembrandt did not inhabit a Laodicean's world of ideas: he had a strong sense of spiritual values, the strongest indeed of any Protestant painter, but only what a believer in private interpretation of the Bible would have. Never has there been, I think, a more disconsolate angel than the one in his Tobias and the Angel. Rembrandt understood sadness and defeat, however, and in The Man With the Golden Helmet, the casque built up by touches of paint almost in relief has left us a haunting psychograph, the epitome of disillusioned age.

Perhaps before I heard all this current talk of the end of the world, I would have thought this break-down of the history of Western painting too straight-laced and dogmatic. I don't any longer. When you are on the edge of a volcano, your mind sees things brusquely in black and white. Truth looks one and not many-faceted, as we on earth have tried to make truth appear. So it is best, in order to see truth, to be "narrow-minded" in the sense of intransigent and purposeful. After you have begun to see things morally in black and white, the refinement of Terborch and the beautiful manner in which De Hooch and Vermeer make light steal into the picture merely seems—undynamic. These Dutchmen, and what could be lovelier in its way than Terborch's famous Concert or Vermeer's The Taste of Wine, are limpid reflectors of comfortable existence, not thinkers, nor even commentators. Their world is made up of creature comforts and the pursuit of wealth and pleasure. It is awful to say that such beautiful pictures, poeticizing the world of the senses, contain a canker, but for the historical mind, trying to see things *sub specie aeternitatis,* they do. Much more dynamic are those wonderful paintings of the quattrocento, such as Fouquet's Etienne Chevalier and St. Stephen and Castagno's daringly effulgent Assumption of Our Lady, a-light with orange, red, and mauve, and drawn with a superb, almost lapidary draftsmanship, that highlights what is the most significant—its devotional feeling.

The ages of faith, in the National Gallery's exhibition, begin with the *dugento*—a Westphalian altarpiece of c. 1260—and carry you into the *cinquecento,* a Gossaert, Holbein, Botticelli, and Carpaccio. These ages had this over the succeeding ages, that though they lacked technical variety, they never lacked spiritual and technical unity. So, the pictures painted then have this feeling for happiness, this inner strength and composure, that only strong faith gives. That is why people stand in front of Domenico Veneziano's Portrait Of A Young Lady, surely one of the greatest feminine portraits in the world, or of Botticelli's St. Sebastian, so calm in every aspect of his pose, or of Van der Weyden's Life of St. John, or of Van Eyck's Man With the Pink, all of them supreme in their sphere, and ask themselves—if their minds are free to roam that far—what secret did these painters have for satisfying the mind. Ineffably lovely technique and arduous training, of course. But it is religious assurance, no matter whether personally possessed or indirectly felt, that does so much to galvanize these masterpieces into spiritual unity. All is simple. Emotions are not paraded. How controlled yet sensitive is that sophisticated, cool, yet curiously alive Portrait of a Young Lady by Domenico Veneziano, the pale blue of the sky setting off her marmoreally chiseled profile. Holbein's Portrait of an Elderly Man, equally self-controlled, is a minatory thing, awesome to see; you cannot forget it, nor either, for that matter, the sharp good looks of George Gisze by the same painter, or the slightly libertine good looks of two of the young men by Bronzino.

These highly controlled, in the sense of perfectly integrated, pictures are, save for the Bronzinos, in the three galleries on the ground floor of the National Gallery. The Dutch, the seventeenth and eighteenth century French and Italians are upstairs. I doubt whether such a wonderful assemblage of great Italian, French, Flemish, and German pictures has ever been massed in one room in America as is now in the long first gallery downstairs. It leads one's mind back to the 1820's when the Kaiser Friedrich Museum was being built to accommodate what was to be its spiritual keystone, the unique Solly collection, very little augmented by pictures from Frederick the Great such as Correggio's Leda and the

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Swan and from the Suermondt collection in 1874. Wilhelm Bode, director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, worked hard at building up the collections, especially in the Dutch school, which was his specialty. He bought carefully, not extravagantly. Some of the fifteen Rembrandts, acquired in London, Paris, and Switzerland, would be a testimony to that, but the kingpins of the collection are in the Italian and Flemish quattro—and cinquecento. A great many of these pictures which are now shown at the request of our Army Department before being returned to Germany were unframed when the Army first found them in a German salt mine. Plain wooden frames have been fashioned and make some of the brighter paintings in the Italian group, such as the Castagno, more significant and easier to study.

One gladly lets one's mind be branded with memories of the glorious pictures on the ground floor—among them, the three early Raphaels, the five Botticellis, the Pollaiuolo, the Lorenzettis and the Sassetta, Mantegna's Presentation, Carpaccio's Burial of Christ, Bellini's rare Resurrection, Fra Angelico's Last Judgment, two fine Conrad Witzes, a Robert Campin, the Van der Weydens, a Vermeer-like Petrus Christus of Lady Talbot, a Georges de la Tour reddish candlelight canvas, a Caravaggio Amor, two Breughels, Patinir's Rest On the Flight, and three precious little landscapes, all on copper, by Adam Elsheimer, the precursor of the Claudian landscape.

Then one is ready to go upstairs to the main floor to five more galleries. Here one sees the effects of work done after the ages of faith. There are many and varied beauties—Poussin's Campagna with St. Matthew, Tiepolo's Via Crucis, the Dutch genre, the Kalfs, the great Rembrandts like the Preaching of John the Baptist, Daniel's Vision, A Rabbi, and the delectable Landscape With A Bridge, so unassuming it seems almost trivially painted until the characteristic gleam of light illuminating it reveals the hand of the master. Even to the paintings of Rembrandt, whose personal despair, vainly complemented by portrayals of Old Testament stories, is another earmark of shattered faith, one can apply the same acid test as one so successfully does to the paintings downstairs. In a word, they have no claptrap.

Communications

WAGES — PRICES — PROFITS

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: In his thoughtful reply to my review of *The Economic Reports of the President,* Mr. Casey says that he does "not propose to get into a debate." That's a big relief; for, frankly, I don't feel at all qualified to debate the subtleties of economic science with the Chairman of the Board of Editors of the Research Institute of America. On the other hand, Mr. Casey will have to admit, I think, that, for one who isn't sparring for a debate, he raises a whale of a lot of controversial questions. To say the very least, his multitudinous questions (almost stacatto-like in their frequency) can't be answered, either to his satisfaction or my own, in a single letter; I shall confine my remarks to what I think are the highlights of his letter.

At the outset, let me say that I regret—I was about to say "resent"—Mr. Casey's gratuitous tendency, if only by the tone of his questioning, to line me up with the collectivists. "Does that mean," he asks, "that Father Higgins is rooting for us to plunge into the socialism and collectivism which prevail in Europe?" No, it doesn't mean anything of the kind, Mr. Casey. Either I failed to make myself clear on this point in the original review, or Mr. Casey was a little excited when he asked the question—or both. But if I am opposed to socialism, I like to think that Mr. Casey would agree with me that not everything that goes by the name of socialism in American circles deserves the opprobrium which is usually attached to the word. I also like to think that he would admit that there are a few things which even the United States can learn from the social experiments which are being carried on by some of the very best Christians of Europe. No, Mr. Casey, I am not in favor of socialism; but neither am I in favor of the NAM's alternative.

Which brings me to my second point. Mr. Casey, in my opinion, is overly-sensitive to my criticism of the NAM. Suffice it to say, for brevity, that if Mr. Casey really thinks that it is irrelevant, in the twentieth century, to talk about the economic individualism of official NAM propaganda, he and I are even further apart in our thinking than he imagines. I have read and reread the NAM's monumental bible "The American Individual Enterprise System," two volumes (McGraw-Hill). I happen to disagree with its basic philosophy rather completely, and I am conceited enough to insist, even in the face of Mr. Casey's impatient and rather didactic reference to "straw men," that it's perfectly relevant to say so in any and every discussion of current economic problems. This is particularly true in view of the fact that the NAM maintains a rather influential lobby in Washington. It really does. And, believe you me, it's a real lobby—anything but a straw man.

Mr. Casey makes fun of the following excerpt from the President's Report: " . . . the accumulations of capital over the years have in fact involved deprivations of the rank and file worker." By way of quick rebuttal, he then cites statistics to demonstrate that wage increases, between 1879 and 1946, paralleled increases in capital investment. His statistics are correct, of course, but would Mr. Casey deny that wage increases might have increased even more rapidly during this period had there been a more balanced distribution of economic power—for example, had the NAM (sorry, Mr. Casey) been more favorably inclined towards trade unionism and decent social legislation? May I say that I was more than a little disappointed by Mr. Casey's tendency to rely so exclusively on statistics—almost, if I may so, to the point of ignoring some of the human aspects of the economic problem. All of us (including myself) who study our economics from books and statistical charts

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might profitably spend our vacations in the slums. Down among God's poor we might learn that, the printed word to the contrary notwithstanding, there *have* been deprivations of the rank and file worker.

Mr. Casey is at pains to say that the record of the American economy is better than the record of other economic systems. So it is. Frankly, however, we might have expected Mr. Casey to fill out the picture and tell us roughly how many of our benefits we owe to the system itself and how many have been wrung from the system only over its agonized protests. Besides, comparisons of this sort, if not always odious, can sometimes be made to do tricks with the one who insists on using them. New Zealand, for example, has a higher standard of living than Mississippi; but New Zealand doesn't believe in "free enterprise." And so on, and so forth.

Mr. Casey suggests that perhaps the President's Economic Reports are political documents—political in the most pejorative sense of the word. Perhaps. If so, that's a matter for Mr. Casey to fight out with the Administration between now and election day in November. Meanwhile, I will merely say that at least two of the three members of the Council of Economic Advisors who lend their names to the introduction to the volume in which the three reports are reprinted are reasonably orthodox (even by Mr. Casey's standards) in their long and illustrious backgrounds. As for myself, I just can't picture Mr. Nourse's selling his professional soul for the honor and glory of the Democratic National Committee. Can you, Mr. Casey?

I did not mean to say in my review that the imbalance among prices, wages, and profits was the *only* problem in the American economy. I was reviewing a book —not writing one. I said that, according to my understanding of that book, the President seemed to be saying that the central problem was the imbalance among prices, wages, and profits. If, by failing to emphasize certain other aspects of the economic problem, I distorted the President's meaning—and/or the facts—I plead guilty of carelessness. But, for the life of me, I can't quite understand Mr. Casey's distress over what I had to say (echoing the Reports) about the price-profit-wage equation. If that isn't the central problem in any non-totalitarian economy, what is the central problem? Furthermore, let me repeat, if only for the record, what I said about production—or what I quoted from the President on the subject of production. I merely said that increased production alone is not the answer to the economic problems, that increased production can be distributed either equitably or inequitably, wisely or unwisely, etc.

No, I don't expect "to find a Mind which will tell each of us how much wages, how much prices, how much profit we are to get so as to maintain the ideal balance in perpetuity." And, again, I prefer to think that Mr. Casey was a little excited when he half-way implied that I harbor such totalitarian leanings. I do expect, however, that the American people will find a way to arrive at what Pope Piux XI refers to as "an agreement of plans and wills" in working out an equitable balance among prices, wages, and profits. I do not anticipate that they will continue to put their trust in "free competition" as we have known it in the past. I much prefer to think—or hope, if you will—that Phil Murray and Walter Reuther, in asking for an Industry Council System, more faithfully reflect the thinking of the masses of free Americans than do the NAM *et al* in asking for a return to "free enterprise." Furthermore, as a Catholic, I am absolutely convinced that Murray and Reuther more faithfully reflect the thinking of the social encyclicals.

Mr. Casey suggests that an Industry Council system is synonymous with the Corporate State. Pope Piux XI tried to answer that one in *Quadragesimo Anno*. I refer Mr. Casey to that great encyclical for an easy lesson in the art of distinguishing between Benito Mussolini and Philip Murray. Mussolini didn't believe in the freedom of association; Mr. Murray does. Mussolini was a fascist; Murray is a democrat who believes that rational men, if they want to retain their freedom, ought to sit down together to plan systematically for their common economic welfare. He is tired of being told that rational men ought to hang their reason on the hat rack before they enter the field of economics. He thinks that Pius XI knew what he was talking about when he said that "competition . . . clearly cannot direct economic life" and that "this function is one that the economic dictatorship which has recently displaced free competition can still less perform." Does Mr. Casey disagree?

Yes, Mr. Casey, I am opposed to the Corporate State. Perhaps that's why I am in favor of an Industry Council system. I fear that, in the absence of an Industry Council system, the government (under Truman, Dewey, Wallace, Taft, Eisenhower, etc.) will be compelled to make more and more of those economic decisions which, in a healthier society, ought to be worked out jointly within industry by organized management and organized labor working together—with the assistance of the government, but free from its stifling domination.

THE REVEREND GEORGE G. HIGGINS.

EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION

Durham, N. C.

TO the Editors: Recently in going through a back number of COMMONWEAL (February 13), I came across an editorial on ESP (extrasensory perception), one that might well have been a review of my recent book, "The Reach of the Mind." Naturally, I was very much pleased to see so important a periodical as yours give such thoughtful treatment to the research to which a few of us are devoting our lives.

Your discussion itself is challenging. You question my view that a more effective control over our psychic abilities will be to the good of society as a whole. I recognize that this point is debatable. It is not, like ESP itself, an established scientific finding. It remains to be seen, if we wish to be certain about it, what the final social consequences of ESP will be.

We do have the experience of the past, however, on

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which to rely for the tentative judgment we must make in deciding whether it is worth while to pursue these investigations. In the past all the extensions of our perceptual powers have netted to civilization a great margin of profit. ESP would be, like these other instruments and abilities, neutral in itself; but we cannot but regard it as vastly advantageous to extend our intelligent grasp over nature and over ourselves.

My own feeling is that the greatest advantage to be gained from pursuing these studies is likely to come, not from any application of the abilities to practical affairs, but rather from the knowledge we are getting with regard to the spiritual order of the universe. We are finding, in studying these strange powers of the mind, scientific evidence of the limitation of physical principles in accounting for human personality. For myself, and I think for a great share of present-day humanity, it is high time we go after this nonphysical side of man's nature with all the means of inquiry at our disposal.

We have, unfortunately, been led to think that science and religion are in conflict. This confusing impression, which has pervaded a great deal of the thought of the last three or four centuries, breaks down when we come to recognize that today it is merely the conflict between an unwarranted materialistic hypothesis of the nature of man that is in conflict with the spiritualistic philosophy of religion. Once we turn the inquiring methods of science to work on the investigation of the true nature of the human mind, as we have been doing in Parapsychology, we find that it does not fit the materialistic hypothesis at all; only in its sensorimotor functions does it conform to space-time-mass relations.

You will, I think, agree with me that if we do nothing more than to establish some effective roadblocks against the advance of materialistic thinking in the world today that we shall have accomplished something of immediate benefit to humanity.

May we consider Russia as an example? Much of the world today is in great fear of Russia and the spread of Russian doctrines. I think you and I can agree that the best point at which opponents should fight these doctrines, if it is possible, is in the realm of ideas. To such doctrines materialism is basic, just as for the philosophy of the Christian democracies that oppose them a spiritual conception of human nature is basic. As you know, the one type of idea that is exchangeable at par value in every country is the established fact of science. It would, then, be *dynamite* to the materialistic philosophy of Russian Communism to establish the spiritual nature of man as scientific fact. And since we mean by "spiritual" something which transcends physics, I think we can claim to have established it already. Our findings are not, it is true, widely recognized among fellow scientists, though we can hardly complain about the rate of progress we are making on that score. Science, too, has its orthodoxy; and it is a materialistic one, denying in advance the possibility of the findings of our investigations.

The last chapter of my book goes at greater length into such implications of the present research findings as these, and I will say no more here. On the general unification of science and religion, however, let me end with a quotation from a distinguished Catholic scholar, Dr. F. Sherwood Taylor, Curator of the Museum of the History of Science at Oxford University. In a recent article entitled "The Scientific World-Outlook," in the November, 1947, issue of *Philosophy,* (in which the significance of the ESP experiments at Duke are briefly mentioned), Dr. Taylor says: "To my mind, the only hope for the world is the incorporation of the religious, philosophical, and scientific outlooks in a single comprehensive view, and I would say emphatically that this incorporation has not been accomplished and that its accomplishment is the most immediate and urgent of tasks for those who wish men well.

"Let me recall what happened in the thirteenth century. A new source of knowledge and a new mode of thinking was imported into the Western world by the translation of the texts of the Greek writers of antiquity, notably Aristotle. This enormously enriched science and philosophy: the Church after some hesitation embraced this new learning. The philosophy of Aristotle, when applied to the Christian revelation, suggested a great number of new questions about religion and modes of answering them: the result was the great system of Catholic theology that we have today. Now we are confronted with a much more difficult but not an impossible task. If the scientist will enlarge his world beyond that of the materialist, and adapt his methods of thinking constructively, not destructively, to the ethical and religious field, he will find new questions to ask and new answers, and the consequence will be, not the abolition of ethics as is threatened by materialism, but the restatement of perennial truths in terms which will be clearly understood and warmly accepted by the modern world."

J. B. RHINE.

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THE EDITORS.

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The Stage & Screen

The Cup of Trembling

I'M AFRAID Louis Paul's dramatization of his own novel, "Breakdown," does not add anything to the late spate of alcoholic literature. The affair concerns a successful lady columnist, who finds herself receding into "blackouts" after bouts of heavy drinking. Thereafter, her decline into complete dipsomania introduces a fantastic psychoanalysist, an effulgent A.A. member, and a good many temporary people into the fable of her salvation. It all makes an ill-wrought play. And moreover, it is graced by several of the most ill-conceived settings by Charles Elson I have ever seen. Mr. Elson's design for his homeset—an apartment on Central Park West, decorated in quarreling colors on a jammed floor-plan, is incredible. And all of his furniture is grotesque. His doctor's couch, for instance, could only be called a conch, and requires even the infinitesimal Elizabeth Bergner to undergo her analysis curled up like a reluctant snail. A difficult process, even to watch. However, if anything saves the evening (and I cannot admit that anything does), I will say the star's performance contributes a brave effort. All of the familiar Bergner nervosities are here used to honest effect, and the several moments when she is left alone on the stage in a state of soliloquy, companioned only by a big amber bottle, are frankly impressive. That excellent actor, Millard Mitchell, together with John Carradine, Arlene Francis, and others, also delivers honest work; but since most of these characters are cut into "bits," and as all of them speak in a literary rather than dramatic fashion, I don't think the business is worth the time or the money. (*at the Music Box.*) KAPPO PHELAN.

A Movie Must Move

NO MATTER how good the plot of a novel or play may be, when it is used as the core of a movie it must be retold in cinematic terms. Recently we have seen many new films that stemmed from stage or book, and while some of these are winning audiences because of their stars, most of them really don't get to first base as examples of cinema.

"B. F.'s Daughter," based on the Marquand novel, has been made into a talky tract in which Barbara Stanwyck learns that her father's money can't buy success for her husband or happiness for their marriage. Van Heflin and Charles Coburn are excellent as the leading men, but the performances do not save this film from being any more than a loquacious rehash of muddled political thinking. *"All My Sons,"* stemming from Arthur Miller's play, has movie material in its plot about a father who sold defective cylinders to the government during the war. But this material has been presented in stage technique; and while the arguments are interesting and Edward G. Robinson gives a stirring portrayal as the unscrupulous business man, the whole does not add up to a movie at all. Its script and direction are static.

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George Agnew Chamberlain's novel *"Scudda-Hoo! Scudda-Hay!"* has been made into a pretty Technicolor affair. Its attractive farm locale might even make one think longingly of returning to the soil; and Lon McCallister and his mules are quite refreshing. However June Haver wouldn't convince anyone as a country girl, and the various villains that are packed into this melodrama, in the manner of Charles Dickens at his worst, are likely to make you stay in the city where there are only gangsters and cops to contend with. Cinematically, nevertheless, this picture is all right and lets the camera do most of the work. This is also the case with *"The Smugglers,"* an English importation in handsome Technicolor. Based on Graham Greene's novel, "The Man Within," its plot about a cowardly boy who finally learns about loyalty and bravery as he grows into manhood is a natural for the movies. In transferring Greene's thoughtful story to the screen, Director Bernard Knowles lost a few of its ideas; and when the finished film was edited a few of its sexy scenes were dropped by the wayside. So now there is little left but some very exciting chase sequences and flashes of good acting by Michael Redgrave, Jean Kent and Richard Attenborough.

Erich Maria Remarque's novel, *"Arch of Triumph"* had some interesting things to say about refugees, particularly the floaters in Paris just before World War II. It is amazing that Lewis Milestone, a first-rate director who also helped Harry Brown on this script, has made such a mess of the movie. With an outstanding cast that includes Charles Boyer, Ingrid Bergman, Louis Calhern and Charles Laughton, the finished product is endlessly dull. It droops with tiresome love scenes involving Bergman as a nymphomaniac and Boyer as an illegal doctor, and harps on this single romantic theme until one is ready to welcome almost any distraction. Unfortunately this distraction, when it finally comes, turns out to be a vengeance chase with Boyer pursuing Laughton. Although the performances of Boyer and Calhern are very good, there is so little to recommend "Arch" that I suggest you leave it alone—very alone.

It is surprising that Frank Capra, who knows a good movie when he or anyone else makes one, hasn't done something more cinematic with *"State of the Union."* This lively play was very amusing on the stage in spite of weaknesses in its hurried conclusion. As a movie it has become a series of funny wisecracks statically spouted before the camera, and if the sound track were turned off, we'd have very little to see. Not that the performances are bad: actually most of them are exceptionally good, especially Spencer Tracy as the presidential possibility who gets shoved around by politicians until he finally wakes up and gets interested in the state of the union instead of conniving president-makers; Katharine Hepburn as his wife who sees through male weaknesses but almost lets her love for Tracy destroy her good sense; Adolphe Menjou as the Republican political boss; Van Johnson as the columnist helping to groom Tracy. At times Capra tries to instil a little action into the cleverly worded situations, but usually this action becomes horseplay, as in the airplane scene that moves all right but is downright silly. If you don't mind a comedy's being stagey instead of cinematic and if you can overlook the story's optimistic faith in the survival of the little man no matter what crooked politicians push him around, you'll get some gay laughs out of this lengthy film.

I couldn't help but wonder when I saw Alexander Korda's beautiful production of *"Anna Karenina"* if all this money shouldn't have been spent on a more film-worthy project. Andre Andrejew's sets and Cecil Beaton's costumes are so lovely that they are in a class by themselves. And at times Vivien Leigh is incredibly beautiful as Anna. But somehow Director Julien Duvivier became so obsessed with all this beauty that he forgot to fashion it into a moving film. Its individual shots are quite stirring, and all the train episodes successfully convey an impression of impending doom; but the whole movie adds up to a seemingly endless series of pictures about a woman whose problem doesn't really concern us. Miss Leigh plays Anna without any of the tragic sweep that was so moving in the Garbo performance some years ago. And Kieron Moore is so lightweight as Vronsky that it becomes difficult to understand Anna's infatuation. (This rôle isn't too well written either.) Perhaps the film's greatest fault is in Ralph Richardson's giving such a magnificent performance as Anna's husband. We understand him so well that he almost becomes sympathetic, and this situation changes the meaning of Tolstoy's story. One can enjoy this English version of "Anna Karenina" for its static artistry, but as a movie or as a thoughtful study of a woman's moral disintegration it is quite disappointing.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books

Appointment On the Hill. Dorothy Detzer. Holt. $3.00.

MISS DETZER'S book is a tribute, a precept, and what is of greatest pertinence, a warning.

The tribute is to the men and especially the women who for the last fifty years have struggled in the cause for peace, to their faith, their persistence, their tenacity, and their cohesion. Some of their names, like those of Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, are famous, but there are, and were, hundreds of others of equal faith and determination. To anyone who has had the privilege of knowing a few of these this book evokes the broader memory of women who at the same time were also pioneers in education, in suffrage, in labor legislation, in social service. They were the first women to group themselves as women to work for their common cause. Every American woman and, in more ways than they may like to admit, every American man owes them a debt. Any increase in their renown, such as Miss Detzer's book, deserves attention.

The precept lies in the manner in which Miss Detzer acted for twenty years as Washington lobbyist for The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She rightly distinguished between good lobbyists and bad lobbyists, between lobbies and Interests seeking to

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corrupt power and lobbies whose sole interest is their power to benefit mankind. At times in the narrative Miss Detzer writes as if the WIL were the only lobby of the latter kind but this prejudice, like the predominence of her personality, derives less from intention than from intense enthusiasm and single-hearted purpose. Her job was to be alert to any threat to peace and freedom, to keep herself and her organization above the suspicion of personal or political taint, to secure the support of the elected representatives of the people to her cause. It is to her credit that she fulfilled these requirements and worked so long in harmony with these representatives. It is likewise to the credit of the people that they had elected such men as Borah, Norris, and Nye to be their representatives. For the lesson of the book is that such Senators exist in our Congress and that under our system of government vigilant, interested and above all active groups of citizens can counteract evil.

The warning is more implicit and more inclusive. This book is one of many recent danger signals. The danger itself has been lurking among us for many years and can be described by a number of questions. Why, for instance, despite the poignant, valid reasons Miss Detzer had for devoting her life to stopping war, despite the firm faith, the ability, the devotion, does her book leave the impression that good intentions, plus courage, plus aptitude are not enough? Why, after a dozen years in Washington, was she so naïvely dismayed by an embargo on arms to Spain and none on arms to China? Why, despite its idealism, does the W.I.L. appear to have formulated only affirmative policy, that expressed at a Senate committee hearing on Naval appropriations in 1936? I have said the warning is more implicit. Why do the other efforts seem to be only palliatives? Could it be that contrary to Miss Detzer's belief and that of many others, violence is not related to security? Could it be because too many people and groups mistake a moral code of action for an affirmative policy? I have said that the warning is more inclusive. Miss Detzer reminds us that until E.R.P. the United States' foreign policy consisted of the Monroe Doctrine and the Open Door in China, each a brand of nationalism. But peace is international and isn't it true that we Americans are all amateurs in dealing with international problems? That our knowledge of history is as meager as Miss Detzer's and our confusion between worthy efforts against war and strong offensives for peace is just as deep? Have we yet evolved more than the fllmsiest policy for peace? Have we yet done anything to purge our democracy of its evils and fortify our Christianity so that they can be offered to other peoples as preferable to atheistic totalitarianism?

FLORENCE CODMAN.

Communism and the Conscience of the West. Fulton J. Sheen. Bobbs. $2.50.

ONLY at a slow pace does our Western World realize the serious menace of communism and the expansionist dynamics of Soviet policy. Again and again Stalin's fellow-travelers have been able to lure us into complacency. A generation already scared by two world wars would not believe that the totalitarian hydra remained alive, in spite of all our sufferings and the total smashing of the once powerful Hitler gang. Americans would not believe that the Stalin gang whose expansion to the West was aided by the blunders of American policy is as dangerous to our liberal way of life as was the Hitler brand of dictatorship.

The Church was more on the alert than the secular powers. The Vatican recognized communism as an international doctrine and organization much more dangerous than the national phenomena of Italian fascism and German nazism. While fascism was condemned in the Italian Encyclical *"Non Abbiamo Bisogno"* and nazism in the beautiful German of the Encyclical *"Mit brennender Sorge,"* Communism, Christianity's most sinister enemy, was condemned in the solemn and universal language of Latin in the Encyclical *"Divini Redemptoris."*

Following the tradition of the Church, Monsignor Sheen faces communism not primarily as an economic or political concept but as a philosophy and though he avoids calling it an "anti-Christian" philosophy; which indeed it is, he considers it "a secularization or a dedivinization of Christianity."

Monsignor Sheen stresses emphatically that the Church is not anti-communist because she is pro-capitalist. On the contrary, from an economic point of view, the Church is not less antagonistic to monopolistic capitalism than to Stalinism. Capitalism concentrates wealth in the hands of a few capitalists and communism in the hands of a few bureaucrats, and both end in the proletarianization of the masses. The author thinks concentration of wealth is an evil, whether on the Hudson or the Volga. All that Communists do in their "superficial revolution" is to substitute the capitalism of power for the capitalism of money. Christian revolution, the author says, is a real revolution, because it changes souls and not merely institutions. Communism seeks the brotherhood of man without the fatherhood of God and has no place for the man's dignity.

Nevertheless Monsignor Sheen exhorts us not to hate Communists. "By hating Communists we advance communism, for communism grows in discord just as disease thrives in dirt." Instead we should convert our erring brothers, the Communists. But this does not mean that the author limits the fight against communism to prayers and meditation. On the contrary, he offers a good deal

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of practical advice on how to fight communism in the economic, political, educational, moral and religious field. He asks for the diffusion of private property and consequently that workers should share in the profits, managements and ownerships of industry. Perhaps his most interesting notion is for "chaplains" in all types and sizes of industry with functions like those of army chaplains.

But despite the book's abundance in thoughtful suggestions, I find no answer to the question that is the agonizing nightmare of the Western statesmen and of any politically responsible person. As we are menaced by the dynamics of communism and the western expansion of the Kremlin's realm and see not even straws for the hope that this danger will suddenly end—are we allowed to use our technical potentialities before it is too late? Or must we wait till the Soviets are technically superior and thereby enabled to attack us and enforce their ideas over the whole globe? The formidable consequences involved in this question frighten even the most courageous political leaders. Monsignor Sheen does not cover the ugly problems of power politics and military decisions in the contents of his book.

MAX FISCHER.

Nothing Ever Happens Sunday Morning. Blanche Cannon. Putnam. $2.75.

IT'S BEEN a long time since the principles of good narrative writing were first stated for all who write to read. Yet authors continue to write about serious subjects in such a way that no emotion—not pity, nor fear, nor pleasure—is aroused in the reader. Ennui is the only feeling evoked by "Nothing Ever Happens Sunday Morning." To put it more directly: this story is about a Sunday morning in the home and church of a Mormon bishop whose son had seduced a village girl. Would or wouldn't the girl tell who was the father of the child she was to have? Would or wouldn't the bishop, who hoped to be an apostle, learn that his son had been wicked? If the bishop didn't find out, the son could go to Harvard. The reader never knows whether it is worse (or better) for the father to learn the truth, and keep his son home, or for the not very admirable boy to get away to Harvard and faraway, greener fields. On the whole, the narrow life of the Utah village and within the bishop's family is dull and depressing; the presentation of this life in narrative style is less tiresome than the life itself would be but this is slight praise for a story.

RUTH BYRNS.

Parris Mitchell of Kings Row. Henry and Katherine Bellamann. S. & S. $3.00.

"A MAN may live in the Middle West without loss of stature," Parris Mitchell assures a young friend in one of this novel's many quiet times for thinking things out. Actually, the characters in this book and those of its predecessor, "Kings Row," diminish amazingly. In both novels there is an overgenerous amount of madness and other grip-losing forms, more than would seem statistically possible to a town of four thousand libidos. "Kings Row" conveyed murder, incest, sadism, and sudden death from natural (plot) causes in righteous tones; now we have a decapitation with a cleaver, a compulsion victim who bays at the moon, and a little boy who drowns on his birthday to shower guilt complexes on his survivors.

One is moved to feel that all this is for some scrutable purpose, and it is. In the thriving community of Kings Row there is neither good nor evil, but there is (shades of Babbitt and his ilk) service. As for the conceit of service, W. H. Auden has hit the thing off with his remark; "We are all here on earth to help others; what on earth the others are here for I don't know." No one can exactly acquit Dr. Mitchell of priggishness in his service, either; his wife has to die (she deserved to, because he married her only for her resemblance to a childhood sweetheart, and she didn't make him "strong" a bit) before he can feel for his real love "an elation that surged through him and brought him to his feet." (He rushed to the telephone too.)

Mrs. Bellamann has been faithful to the spirit of her late husband's book and to the parts of this sequel which he lived to block out. In some ways this is a better writing job, for "Kings Row" indulged in dialogue in the fashion which Henry James considers an evasion of the novelist's art. Some of the old characters reappear; Father Donovan, it can be reported, is as fuzzily out of focus as he was before and still opposing Protestant formalism by what is fondly believed to be Catholic mysticism. But the whole thing is blurred, for violence and outrage find no answer in musical therapy, the release of psychic energies—"for the sake of the genial humanity developed that way"—or the right romance at last. The really final problems are left just about where the four humors would have left them. Now Fulmer Green had an excess of black bile, whereas Parris. . . .

RILEY HUGHES.

The Steep Places. Norman Angell. Harper. $3.00.

SIR NORMAN ANGELL takes the title of his latest work from that "steep place" down which the devils ran, after Our Lord had cast them into the herd of swine. Apparently, we are in somewhat the same position today: facing the "steep places" in international relations, bedeviled by "those baser forces of the human spirit" which drive us to destruction. This book is evidently intended as a kind of practical manual for exorcising the devils of international relations.

The author finds many such devils in what he considers the illusions we have regarding the causes of war. Among the many that he brings forward the more important are: the notion that we want peace at any cost, that the Common Man can't be wrong, that more education will automatically solve our problems of living peaceably with one another, that mankind can be saved only by a new economic system, that British imperialism makes for war rather than peace, that the world cannot be divided into two blocs without risking war. Such judgments are exposed as illusions generating misplaced passions in defiance of fact.

In all the illusions that he considers, that which most deeply arouses the author's concern is the idea that one view must prevail with its accompanying ideological passion that drives men forth upon crusades. He finds it not only in the totalitarian systems, but also in the Anglo-American world, among the non-Communist Left in their drive towards Socialism, and in all who demand the establishment of democracy throughout the world. The resulting ideological warfare is repeatedly compared with the religious wars of the 17th century, and, accordingly, the best hope held out is for some such settlement as that

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concluding those wars, which agreed to tolerate differences in the interest of civil peace.

Sir Norman Angell obviously has difficulty in appreciating the "Crusading Spirit." He recognizes that generosity of impulse and high idealism may motivate those who fight even for a mistaken cause and he admits that in many cases their actions cannot be attributed to an evil will. Yet his answer ultimately is that such things are all a mistake, and he offers instead a habit of reasonableness, the application of "the scientific method to social and political problems," and an "expedient eclecticism." Certainly, these are not new and untried ideals, and there seems good reason for believing that much of the attraction of nazism, fascism, and communism lies in their revolt from such ideals and their appeal to heroism and devotion. The liberal society of the West, for which the author speaks, would seem to need the same qualities, if it is not to lose by default the battle for the spirit. Nor does this deny the need for working out some means of preventing ideological warfare from degenerating into a test of armed strength. But it seems highly unlikely that an appeal for reasonableness and eclecticism will satisfy either demand. They are tools of questionable utility for the exorcism of devils. OTTO BIRD.

The Madonna in Art. Introduction by Henri Ghéon; notices by Renée Zeller. Paris: Éditions Pierre Tisné. (*Continental Book Center, N. Y.*) $15.00.

SAINT LUKE the Evangelist, whose talents were many, is said to have painted a portrait of the Virgin Mary from life; Roger van der Weyden has represented him in the act of doing so. It is most obvious, however, that Van der Weyden did not have access to any such portrait: his Virgin is clothed in the sumptuous robes of the wife of a prosperous Flemish burgher; through the background winds picturesquely what is unmistakably the Meuse. If Saint Luke did in truth paint Mary's portrait—believed to have fallen into the hands of Pulcheria, Empress of Byzantium—all traces of it have certainly been lost, as this volume bears witness: the representations of Mary are as various as the varieties of religious and plastic experience during the Christian era. Mary is now a Renaissance noblewoman, now a Spanish peasant; now an ascetic mystic wasted into the appearance of a flame, now a florid, well-fed, fashionable *Flamande*.

This is as it should be. The mother of the Image of all men must surely be herself the image of all women. The substance of Mary is not her appearance but her function and attributes. These, many hundreds of painters during the flowering of western art have depicted according to their personal talents and degree of devotion. The record of this is superbly presented in this luxurious volume.

It would have been so easy—even expected—for the authors of the introduction and the "notices" regarding individual paintings to have relied merely upon mysticism or, worse, uplift. Henri Ghéon (who wrote the introduction) and Renée Zeller (who contributed the notices) have contrived, with no diminution of piety, to make their book far more than a paean to Mary. Christianity and its values are taken, as it were, for granted—as sufficiently validated by the glorious tributes to it included here. By exhibiting and economically describing the manner in which the memorable artists of the Christian era have treated a single favorite subject, they have provided a pithy summary of the pictorial art of the period.

For convenience of discussion and comparison, M. Ghéon has divided his text, and arranged the reproductions, into four sections: *Ave Maria*: the Virgin before the Birth of Christ; *Mater Amabilis*: the young Mother; *Mater Dolorosa*: the Sorrowing Mother; and, finally, *Regina Coeli*: the Most Glorious Queen of Angels and Mediator between God and Men.

The text is brief; the notices are short. But both are enormously informative—never truckling to the watered contemporary taste in religious iconography. A few of the judgments are questionable. Georges de la Tour, for example, is given, it seems to me, more value than he deserves, especially in view of the high standard by which Italians are judged; but the wide representation of French, Flemish, German and Spanish examples is a welcome corrective to the tendency of our college art courses to concentrate upon the Italian school. Only one example later than the 17th century is included, on the basis of its primitive devotional quality; Gauguin's serene *"Ia Orana Maria"* (in the Polynesian: 'Hail Mary' with an added meaning of "Welcome").

I should add that the reproductions are in nearly all cases superlative. In a few cases, the captions fail to state that only a detail is reproduced; and the absence of measurements in the notices makes it difficult to visualize the scale of paintings one has not seen in position. On the basis purely of black-and-white reproduction, one is led to question at least one attribution—the "Madonna with Cherubim" assigned to Mantegna; but possibly in color this is more clearly of Mantegna's late period. And there are numerous typographical errors, doubtless due to present-day publication conditions. These are carping criticisms of a superb, solid addition to anyone's library. DAVID BURNHAM.

James Madison, 1780-1787. Irving Brant. Bobbs. $6.00.

MR. BRANT spent seven years preparing this volume, the second in his biographical study of James Madison. The first volume referred to Madison as the Virginia revolutionist, and studied him in the period from 1751 to 1780. This second volume, which speaks of Madison as the nationalist, places him in the years from 1780 to 1787, the so-called critical period of American history. Although we are inclined to think of Madison, the reputed author of the Virginia resolutions of 1798, as an ardent advocate of states' rights, Mr. Brant is of a different opinion. He believes that Madison worked for the strengthening of the Articles of Confederation, for a limitation upon the powers of the states, for the fiscal policies we associate only with Hamilton, and for such a sense of nationalism in this nation that we should consider it unnecessary for us to make any entangling alliances. It may seem strange to some to think of Madison in this period as being nationalistic, and as hostile to state authority, but the author presents a wealth of convincing data. Much stress is placed upon Madison's discouragement with the Second Continental Congress in 1780. It seemed to him that the four-year-old nation was actually "disintegrating into thirteen parts because of the declining power of its central government." Brant believes that Madison was so fearful that England was going to win the war that he, Madison, was willing to

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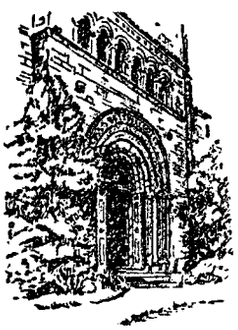

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resist and criticize the narrow views of state legislatures when those bodies indicated a lack of concern for the interests of the country as a whole.

Emphasis is placed on the worthlessness of Continental currency by the year 1780. This situation virtually paralyzed Washington's effort to carry on the war. Brant remarks, relative to this matter: "For Madison this was the paramount concern, both as an American patriot and as a probable defendant in a treason trial if the war was lost?" That sentence expresses bluntly why Madison worked for victory, knowing that there was a direct connection between victory and a normal span of life.

The treaty drawn up in 1782 and Franklin's relations to it are given much attention. Madison defended Franklin's work at Paris. Madison was, according to Brant, a partisan of the French alliance but not of France. He was opposed to permanent alliances with other governments but he was realistic enough to know that the war could not be won without help from France, and he acted accordingly. Madison's realistic understanding of diplomacy receives more emphasis in this volume than is usually accorded it. At times the author devotes more attention to Franklin than to Madison but there is always a justification for it. The book is actually a history of the Second Continental Congress and of the Congress of the Articles of Confederation government. It has to be that in order to trace Madison's varied interests. The author has made the period 1780-1787 come to life again. More than forty pages of explanatory notes indicate the research that preceded the writing of the book. An excellent index increases the utility of an exceptionally fine addition to American biography. PAUL KINIERY.

The English Townsman. Thomas Burke. Scribner's. $3.75.

DRAWING his material from both familiar and little-known diaries, literary works and old prints (many of which are handsomely reproduced), the author discusses the food, fashions, amusements, manners, customs and attitudes of English townsmen from the fourteenth century to the present. Except for the final chapter, "The Citizen of Today," which I thought superficial, the book is a sound, careful job. Scholars will find here little that is new or surprising, but Mr. Burke has compiled a useful and frequently amusing background study for both the general reader and the student of literature.
JAMES E. CRONIN.

The Land of Shorter Shadows. Erle Stanley Gardner. Morrow. $5.00.

FOR ROCKING CHAIR travel, this book on lower California, no tourist's paradise, but a great place to get away from it all, including the police, this book by a very popular mystery story writer ducking south with camera instead of gun and handcuffs will do.

In Norway. Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen. Viking. $3.00.

MRS. THORNE-THOMSEN, writing for young people, presents an account of the Norwegian way of life that is an inspiration to bigger and richer countries less versed in the real stuff of democratic living and integration of past with present. Excellent woodcuts by Eyvind Earle will make "home-sick" all who have ever traveled in that beautiful and civilized small country.

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Would that Fridtjof Nansen were living at the hour, for the whole world has need of him.

The Well of Living Waters. Pascal P. Parente. Herder. $3.50.

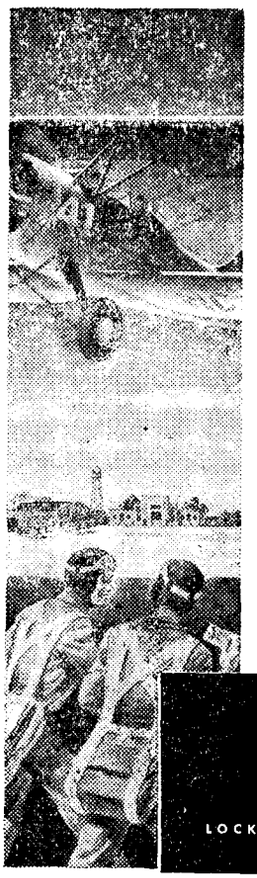
AS A REFERENCE book for those writing or speaking on spiritual subjects, Father Parente's carefully edited collection will probably prove more valuable for its non-biblical selections. For he makes available "the primary sources of the doctrine of the spiritual life" equally from the Bible and from the Fathers of the Church, the theologians, saints and other writers up to the present day. These quotations are arranged under those various headings which index them most clearly and facilitate the book's frequent use.

The Third Spiritual Alphabet. Fray Francisco de Osuna. Translated by a Benedictine of Stanbrook. Newman. $4.00.

THERE are times when one is tempted to think that Catholic publishing in this country has become a spiritual wasteland because of its inordinate timidity and its consequent refusal to publish books about contemplation on the grounds that the "public does not want them." The Newman Bookshop is a very consoling oasis in such a desert. Calmly and without fuss it has been doing very well for itself with reprints of the great mystical writers —Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Francis de Sales, Saint Teresa, Saint John of the Cross and now the Spanish Franciscan, Francisco de Osuna, whose "Third Spiritual Alphabet" is famous because it was one of the books which taught Saint Teresa herself the ways of the interior life.

It is, of course, a rather remarkable book. Definitely a classic, it is little known except by name. But it has very much to recommend it. In the first place, it is one of those books in which the interior life is presented as a *life* and not some kind of a living death. In other words, Osuna is a man whose writing is happy because he himself has found the Living God, the God not of ascetic systems and pious formalism but the God of Love Who reveals Himself to those who have left everything for love of Him. There is, and there should be, something infectious about the happiness of the contemplative. This *Abecedario* overflows with the living waters that were given to its writer not for himself alone but that their torrents might "make glad the city of God."

The keynote of Fray Francisco's "good news" is a thesis that is as old as Christianity, and which yet always comes as a kind of a surprise, because Christian writers tend to lose their perspective in dry speculations and controversies about abstract trifles where they forget that the real object of the Christian life is not ideas about God or works for God but God Himself, possessed and known in a union of perfect love. This Friar, true to his vocation, did what he could to remind everybody of a very simple and very consoling truth: that contemplative prayer, or infused contemplation, is not necessarily something restricted to a small class of peculiar and esoteric souls. It is not even something reserved exclusively for cloistered religious. Fray Francisco taught, as Saint Bonaventure had taught before him and Saint John of the Cross did later on, that even married people in the world were quite free to desire such a grace and could very well seek it, with the right disposi-



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Spring Book Issue

Features in next week's extra-size Spring Book Number will include:

ERIC GILL—letters from a versatile artist on his favorite subject of machine industry and civilization, clarifying his own views of modern progress and making several meaningful suggestions.

G. B. HARRISON—"Shakespeare's Religion" is an examination by the noted Shakespearean scholar, now at the University of Toronto, of evidence in the man's life and works.

DAVID BURNHAM — a contemporary novelist assays the well-turned theories of the art of fiction propounded by Henry James.

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tions, and prepare themselves for it in so far as it is humanly possible to dispose oneself with ordinary grace for something that is a pure gift of God.

Fray Francisco was in conscious reaction against theologians of his time who saw nothing on earth for the average Christian but the alternative between a worldly life or the ordinary practices of religion. He was deliberately striving to fill in the great gap left by preachers whose time was all taken up in correcting wrong-doers and preaching the mere avoidance of sin.

On the other hand, though he brings contemplation close to the average, sincere Christian, he does not preach any "easy way" to sanctity. He promises, indeed, that the grace of infused prayer will be an immense help to spiritual progress and will shorten the way to the heights of perfection, but he keeps reminding his readers of the part they themselves have to play in this work. In vivid and forceful language he stirs up your desire for the grace of contemplation and keeps you alive to the need for self-denial and sacrifice in order to be prepared to receive it, if God should answer your prayer. In other words, he is following the traditional Christian doctrine as it was marked out by his Masters in the interior life, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Bernard and Gerson.

The particular value of this book is that Osuna was writing for beginners and concerned himself exclusively with the problems of those who are on the threshold of the mystical life. Consequently the advice he gives is just as good for those who never quite get over the threshold as it is for those who enter in and pass onward to the inner mansions.

The *Alphabet* is not without some of the minor faults of its type, for it belongs to the species of spiritual encyclopedia that flourished in the high Middle Ages and the early Renaissance. The thread of the reasoning tends to get lost in a forest of illustrations and irresponsible applications of Scripture that end up by creating confusion instead of making things clear. But it has its own peculiar virtues too. Fray Francisco had a strong and appealing personality, if we can judge him by his book. He was a keen psychologist, full of human sympathy and experience of souls. And last of all, his outlook on life, like that of so many other saints, was fundamentally humorous. Certainly that was not the least of the traits that recommended him to Saint Teresa.

THOMAS MERTON.

CONTRIBUTORS

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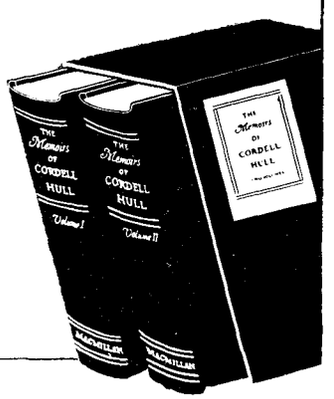

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